

# ANATHEMA

Volume II Issue IX

Free

September 2016

## PRISONS ARE LIT

The wave of informally coordinated prison work strikes and uprisings against prison slavery that began on September 9th already constitutes the biggest prison strike in history and is still ongoing.

At least 29 prisons have been affected, according to inmates' reports to outside organizers and records of prison lockdowns. Organizers from the Incarcerated Workers' Organizing Committee (IWOC) project that at least 20,000 prisoners have refused to work. Many remain on strike.

Information is still coming in about the strike, in spite of a lack of coverage from the mainstream press and obfuscation by prison administrators. Reports on the strike have circulated almost entirely via independent news sources and anarchist media such as itsgoingdown.org and IWOC's facebook page. Corrections departments in Virginia, Ohio and Colorado, states in which outside supporters have received direct confirmation from prisoners that strikes were in action, denied that any inmates had participated in the strike.

Several days in advance of the strike, (*continued on page 4*)

## POLICE STORY

In the early hours of Saturday, September 17, Nicholas Glenn ambushed a Philadelphia police sergeant sitting in her car, shooting 18 rounds that wounded her in the arm and disabled her weapon. In the chase that ensued, Glenn aimed at the manager of a nearby bar, also injuring a civilian in the process, and shot into a civilian vehicle, which ultimately killed one woman. He also managed to shoot and injure a Penn police officer during a shootout that eventually killed Glenn.

Glenn was carrying in his pocket a sealed envelope labeled "doomed people," which contained a letter detailing his hatred of police, and in particular of his probation officer. Glenn did not know the particular police officer that he initially targeted, suggesting that he intended to launch an attack on police in general. Police have not released the specific contents of Glenn's letter.

Glenn had recently been incarcerated, spending a significant amount of time in solitary confinement. At the time of the shooting, he was still under the control of the prison system via probation and parole.

Glenn's foster relatives noted that incarceration had severely transformed him. His foster mother, Joan Griffin, noted that (*continued on page 3*)

## A POLITICS OF CARE

*excerpt from a new communiqué  
about communal child raising*

Communal child raising means that a kid belongs to the world, and to themselves, and that we are honored to help care for them and each other. Communal child raising does not mean there are always more than two caregivers. One person, or two, or twelve, can raise a child communally, and have, since forever.

Parenting is a set of actions, not an identity. The choice to parent is a choice. Every day.

The actions of parenting are our desires made real. In turn, desires emerge from the flows of our real lives and our sense of what's possible.

I imagine communicating with a tiny human about stars and whales. I desire this.

During the pregnancy, an assemblage of friends act in different ways on their desires to care for a kid:

Some cook, desiring a healthy baby.

Some drag abandoned strollers and car seats onto the porch from three blocks away, desiring mobility and shit being free.

Some offer their breast milk.

Some bring by handouts from their doula trainings, or buy cute baby clothes.

Some remind us that a pregnant gender non-conforming person does not instantly become a "mom."

Some cry or rage or steel themselves against the brutal world, and these too are acts of communal care. (That is, when you stay resisting, you make a way for us to move.)

Sometimes there is conflict. We welcome this. When our lived experiences and our ideas of what is possible are different from each other's, (*continued page 3*)



# WHAT WENT DOWN

AUGUST: In Reading, PA fascist Keystone United graffiti was crossed out by anonymous antifascists.

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER: More graffiti and stickers in support of the September 9th prison strike appear in multiple neighborhoods.

SEPTEMBER 2: A protest against Trump in North Philly results in a Trump supporter getting knocked to the ground.

SEPTEMBER 9: Nationwide prisoner strike against slavery begins.

SEPTEMBER 9: A noise demo shoots fireworks and makes noise at the Juvenile Justice Services Center in solidarity with the national prison strike.

SEPTEMBER 13: Security cameras and a UPS box are vandalized in solidarity with the prison strike.

SEPTEMBER 22: Five billboards are vandalized with anti-police slogans and paint along I-76 in South Philly as a gesture of complicity with rebels in Charlotte, NC. ★

## SEPT 9TH POP!BACK

Word of the September 9th noise demonstration at the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) was spread through social media, flyers handed out at bus stops to people going on prison visits, flyers handed out around the neighborhood where the demonstration took place, as well as to people visiting the youth inside.

The point of the demonstration was to make noise for the youth on the inside and to give them a change to let loose, even if only in a limited way inside their cages.

A meet-up was organized via facebook north of the center at 48th and Aspen St. It became known after the demo that some people had problems finding the meet-up location and that this may have lowered turnout. At this spot a group of people in masks started setting up banners and handing out whistles as well as fireworks.

There was an awkward division between the masked up peeps and those who were not in masks. Although some communication happened between the groups, I would like to see more exchanges between people at demonstrations for a better understanding of why some people choose to wear masks and some do not.

People waited around and some started to set off bottle rockets. About 15 minutes after 8pm, someone with a megaphone said it was time to move (as a cop car had rolled by just earlier). The group moved ahead behind a set of banners down 48th toward the JJC. We took the streets and got generally positive responses from people in cars (unlike most demonstrations in center city where angry yuppies try to run marches down). Flyers about the prison strike and just about hating prisons in general were tossed into the air like confetti all along the march.

Some had decided to meet up at the JJC ahead of time. There was some confusion between the marchers and the people set up at the JJC. The marchers walked past the front of the center near 48th and Haverford about halfway down the block to the side parking-lot. The reason was that the front building is an office building for social workers and on the side of the complex behind the parking lot was where the youth were being held in “dorms.”

There was also some confusion expressed as to who organized the demonstration, framed as concern that the demonstration was a ploy by cops. The reason for this was the fireworks. There was fear that this would agitate the cops into giving people gun charges (which is not unheard of) or take it as an excuse to come smash up the demo. A few people left the demonstration because they felt unsafe, which is a completely reasonable response that deserves support. It is important for everyone to be able to assess their own risk. The remaining people joined the demonstration near the parking-lot.

As the noise demonstration went on we saw some people waving on the inside, but it was hard to see much because of the way the center is built to isolate.

Outside there was a cop with a camera taking video of the whole scene, especially trying to film people's faces. “Civil affairs” - or protest cops who wear plain clothes and orange armbands to almost every protest – especially use this information. This information also has the potential to be integrated into facial recognition software, as more departments request funds for “upgrades” (this is the flip side of body-cameras). Eventually some people in masks took exception to this and started putting flags in front of the camera, drumming on the camera, and throwing trash at the cop. Some people shot fireworks at cops and shouted at them to quit their jobs or kill themselves.

Eventually after an hour and a half people started marching back toward Aspen. There was concern expressed that the march was moving too fast for some people. At one point someone shouted to the front to slow down. Making people with needs have to shout to be seen creates an unwelcome dynamic and could potentially lead to the most vulnerable being snagged by the cops. Collectively taking the responsibility to be more mindful of who is around us in the future may address some of these concerns about accessibility.

At this point there was a cop van in front “leading” (more like kettling) the march, but eventually someone threw a flagpole at the back of the van and it moved farther ahead. When the march got back to Aspen St, some people loitered (fuck the police, amirite?) around for a bit longer shouting at cops but eventually everyone dispersed into the night with no arrests.

Some concluding observations:

1) People are gonna do what they're gonna do at these kinds of rackets, like bring fireworks and get rowdy. That's the point of autonomy. There

[2]



are no leaders or organizers whose goal is to keep things orderly. Just the opposite — the goal is to get disorderly. That said, we must be aware that our actions may “turn off” others and split the demo or cause people to leave. Fireworks, flag throwing, and camera blocking are new tactics that are an escalation in the context of demos in the last few years, which has the potential to both expand what people think as well as to demobilize protest state repression or some people avoiding demos that are not specifically designated as “peaceful.”

2) Safety at demonstrations is an illusion, or at the very least relative, and it is not something that can be guaranteed. Ultimately the cops define what is illegal. However, there are steps we can take, like being aware of where people are in the group and trying to keep people together who want to be in the relative safety of a group.

3) There are practical steps we can all take to lessen the impact of surveillance. Wearing masks and refusing to claim actions with named organizations can avoid repression/surveillance down the line because there is less in the way of social ties that can be tracked and people may feel empowered to organize another demonstration completely apart from the initial group who comes together on one particular night.

So take this as an invitation to keep up these demonstrations and be free in the streets.

- a (seriously) sweaty bitch ★

**(A POLITICS OF CARE CONT.)** When our lived experiences and our ideas of what is possible are different from each other's, our desires and actions will inevitably come into conflict. Some of these conflicts will be resolved through changes within ourselves, new critiques, new alignments, new desires. Some will resolve in compromise. Some will not be resolved.

These conflicts are important and we don't have to be afraid of them. We will be wrong. We can trust each other to make moves, to misstep, to listen, to change, to be honest. We cannot expect that no one will ever leave. There will be leaving, and there will be love.

The question of this communiqué is not ‘What are each of us going to do for this particular baby.’ Or, ‘How will I participate in the care of this individual human.’ The question of this piece is, ‘How can this situation help us flesh out our politics of interdependence and care?’

How do we stop hiding our own needs for care? How do we stop depending on the logic of security and its practices of exploitation (the police state, nursing homes, bourgeois self-care models, the non-profit industry) to meet our needs?

How do we stop imposing a capitalist model of transactional relations based on “love” and “trust” onto a living breathing web of beings that are always already connected?

Interdependence — like when the cops, the corporate farms, the material objects don't take care of us we look around and see how bad we really need each other.

**(POLICE STORY CONTINUED)** “he didn't come out the same.” Her daughter, Deedee Griffin, said that Glenn did not have any mental health conditions.

The primarily black West Philadelphia neighborhood in which the shootout occurred is regularly patrolled by at least three different police and security forces, including the University City District security guards and Penn Police as well as the Philadelphia Police Department. These departments are interdependent and collaborate to protect the rapidly gentrifying areas of West Philadelphia and manage its remaining impoverished black neighborhoods via force. Penn Police officer Ed Miller, one of the officers shot by Glenn, had served with the Philadelphia Police for 33 years prior to joining the Penn police force.

The intensity of the ongoing occupation of this neighborhood increased in the hours following the shooting, as hundreds of cops in vehicles and on bikes immediately rushed in to occupy and search the area with guns out. SEPTA service was shut down in that area, helicopters with search lights and infrared beams patrolled from the skies, and pedestrians were stopped and questioned.

As policing and imprisonment have visibly intensified the longterm control and captivity of black populations in the U.S. in recent years, attacks on police have also increased. Nicholas Glenn's actions follow a series of attacks on police over the past few years, including shootings of officers in Baton Rouge and Dallas this past summer and Ismaaiyl Brinsley's ambush of two NYPD officers following the Ferguson rebellion of 2014. In all of these cases, the state swiftly retaliated against the shooters - the Dallas shooting suspect was executed on site by a bomb-equipped robot - and has used the public's demands for police reform to enhance state control.

Police Commissioner Richard Ross commented that “Other than the rantings in that letter, we don't know what [Glenn] was motivated by.” Ross instead emphasized Glenn's arrest record and determination to “hurt a lot of people.” Media and police have been unable to find a religious motive or gang ties to support this account of Glenn's actions. ★

- Care that is not labor
- Care that does not manufacture disposability
- Care that does not depend on the exploitation of the worker, known or unknown
- Care that is not compulsory
- Care that is not only for those that we love
  
- Care like flowing in all directions
- Care like being of and for the land, which is our first family.
- Care like it is a gift to be cared for
- Care like you give me a gift when you let me care for you
- Care like a creative act.
- Care like doing, like day to day. ★



# SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

You did it, you're woke, you got it figured out, things are so messed up, and you know who's responsible, time to speak truth to power right? Nope. Don't. Seriously. Power doesn't care. I'm gonna let you in on a secret — powerful people know they're doing horrible things all the time, and they don't care at all. Even if you remind them, they won't lose any sleep over it.

If your idea of ending oppression and control is having the moral high ground and being right, then speaking truth to power might be right for you. If your idea of ending oppression and control involves stopping oppression and control from happening, you might have to change your approach. I've seen too many angry activists get arrested, beat up, or chased off while trying to deliver some letter or make some speech to a powerful executive or official, only to have them make a show of accepting it, smiling, and then going back to running whatever business or oppressive institution exactly as before. These people know their everyday life is only possible because people are being dominated and abused; they learned it in business school, they learned it when they were still just a neighborhood representative, they learned it at the police academy and in the military barracks, they see it when they walk past the poor janitor in the lobby every morning; the thing is, that doesn't bother them. They aren't outraged at the "injustices" they've built their careers on. When you speak truth to power you're screaming at a wall.

There are so many better things to do with your newfound knowledge. You can spread it among people who don't know, or better yet, people who can do something with it; you can also use it as a map to figure out where you will go next.

Rather than speak truth to power, why not speak truth to people who might be interested in fighting power? Tell a CEO that he's exploiting his employees and he might shrug; tell an employee she's being exploited by her CEO and she can choose to start scheming with you about how to get even. Speaking truth to power is a dead end; it relies on whoever is in charge giving a shit about how you feel, which more often than not they don't. Speaking to people who are suffering because of power about their situation can be a first step in overturning it.

Maybe you're not the talking type at all; maybe the truth isn't worth telling as much as acting on. You know what the problem is and how it works. You don't need to wait for anything but yourself and maybe a friend or two to do something about it. Turn the truth into an action plan. Change "can you believe that [oppressive group] does [heartless thing] to [oppressed population]" into a concrete set of things you can do to interrupt and potentially end a miserable situation.

Don't waste your breath shouting at people who knowingly hurt people they hold power over; it's much better spent whispering into the ears of your friends and potential accomplices. ★

*(PRISONS ARE LIT CONT.)* 400 inmates at Holmes prison in Florida rioted and damaged nearly all the dormitories in a coordinated uprising and attempted escape. Five different prison agencies had to be called in to teargas the rebellion into submission. Also in advance of the strike, prisoners in Lincoln Correctional Center in Nebraska attempted to start fires in the prison.

Major and small "disturbances" continued in Florida prisons on September 9. There were also work stoppages in Holman Prison in Alabama, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Central California, and Kansas directly reported to outside supporters on September 9. Three guards were injured by an inmate in a Tecumseh, NE prison. Chelsea Manning started a hunger strike (that has since ended), publishing a letter that pleads for help.

On September 10, prisoners in the Kinross facility in Michigan rioted, setting fires and destroying two housing units of the prison. There was also rioting in a South Carolina prison on September 10 after 30 inmates refused to return to their cells.

In Australia, youth inmates took over Melbourne Youth Justice Centre with weapons on September 12. Dozens of prisoners in central France stole the warden's keys on September 12, escaping from their cells and rioting.

More than 60 cities across the U.S. held events in solidarity with the strike. There were at least two highway shutdowns (in Durham, NC and in New York City), and protestors were arrested in Atlanta for disrupting a Starbucks during a public demonstration. Solidarity actions were held all over the world, including one in Greece that shut down a McDonalds, and actions in Sweden, Lithuania, Serbia, Canada, Colombia, and an action at the U.S. Consulate in Melbourne, Australia.

Support is needed for striking prisoners, as retaliation is also ongoing. At Holman prison in Alabama, the base of the Free Alabama Movement and one of the prisons most actively involved in the strike, the warden released 20 violent inmates back into the general population, resulting in several stabbings. Fewer than 15 corrections officers were reporting to work as of September 17 and many areas of the prison were left completely unattended, resulting in what contacts are calling a serious humanitarian crisis.

IWOC has a list of perceived leaders who have been targeted and isolated for strike-related organizing, to whom they are requesting supporters send letters. IWOC also has a phone zap system that people can call to put pressure on prison administrators. Strike organizers on the inside have emphasized that outside support and visibility is their only source of protection from retaliation.

It is clear from reports on the inside that the September 9th strike has already served to test and enhance prisoners' networks for communication and coordination and capacity for rebellion. The strike is envisioned not as a single event, but as a crucial step in an escalating and ongoing struggle against prisons and white supremacy. ★